IMT Nuremberg Archives

H – 3791

International Court of Justice

H3791 - 0002

M 119

Record of a Conversation with Herr Hess on May 15th, 1941.

Herr Hess started by making various small complaints and requests. The guard made too much noise at night, might he have certain books etc., etc. I said I would do what I could on all these points.

I then said I had been surprised at his remarks the previous day about Iraq. He replied that he was not acquainted with the details of our relations with or treaty rights in Iraq. All he had meant to say was that since Iraq had fought for Germany, Hitler would have to take account of this fact in any peace settlement.

I then threw a fly over him about Ireland. He said that in all his talks with Hitler, the subject of Ireland had never been mentioned except incidentally. Ireland had done nothing for Germany in this war and it was therefore to be supposed that Hitler would not concern himself in Anglo-Irish relations. We had some little conversation about the difficulty of reconciling the wishes of the South and North and from this we passed to American interest in Ireland and so to America.

On the subject of America Hess took the following line.

1. The Germans reckoned with American intervention and were not afraid of it. They knew all about American aircraft production and the quality of the aircraft. Germany could outbuild England and America combined.
2. Germany had no designs on America. The so-called German peril was a ludicrous figment of imagination. Hitler's interests were European.
3. If we made peace now, America would be furious. America really wanted to inherit the British Empire.

Hess concluded by saying that Hitler really wanted a permanent understanding with us on a basis which preserved the Empire intact. His own flight was intended to give us a chance of opening conversations without loss of prestige. If we rejected this chance, it would be clear proof that we desired no understanding with Germany and Hitler would be entitled - in fact it would be his duty - to destroy us utterly and to keep us after the war in a state of permanent subjection.

If conversations were started, as he hoped, he would like the assistance of:-

Doctor E. Semelbauer, No. 43125) Huyton Camp,
Kurt Haass, No. 44012) near Liverpool.

also one German stenographer (from a camp) and one typist. He also hoped he would be told beforehand with whom he would have to negotiate and that it would not be with people who had taken a leading part in the war agitation against Germany.

Generally speaking, it was difficult to get him to talk politics. He thinks he has told me all he has to say and wishes to use me principally as a channel of complaint. In particular he objects to be closely guarded. He says he came here at great risk to himself and having got here safely has no intention of trying to run away or commit suicide.

(Initialled) I.A.K.

(4086)

22nd January 1946.

Certified that the text set out above and entitled "Record of a Conversation with Herr Hess on May 15th 1941" is a true copy of a document held in the files of H.M.Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, London.

Deputy Chief Prosecutor for the United Kingdom

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INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL
NURNBERG, GERMANY
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INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL

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